

**Council's Improved Budget vetoed by the Mayor: Now We need a real People's Budget**  
Statement by Larry Deutsch, Hartford City Council, Minority Leader, Working Families Party  
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When the mayor's proposed budget came out last month, everyone knew it was bad for the City. It had huge tax increases for homeowners, renters, and businesses. The Council was charged with balancing a budget during economically stressed times.

The Council proposed a better budget. It cut back on spending which included the salaries of highly-paid managers. It hoped to maintain services to residents, avoid layoffs of front-line workers, and keep reasonable taxes to small businesses. Then came the mayor's vetoes.

For true transparency, here are some examples:

1. According to the Mayor, the Council's cuts "will directly harm our neighborhoods by slashing job creation programs." Job creation in the City will continue with federal funding provided specifically from the stimulus package. However, in the last 10 months the Mayor has laid off "front line workers", his cuts have directly harmed the neighborhoods by jepordizing the services to maintain the health and well being of the city such as streetsweepers, refuse workers, maintenance people and inspectors. Also, raised taxes to residents, small businesses and people with fixed-incomes has definitely affected neighborhood morale.
2. According to the Mayor, "Council has increased its own budget [putting] its own needs before public safety, job creation, homeownership, and education." The Council actually transferred funds to better regulate the accessibility to this account for better transparency. And homeowners were to get much better support from the stimulus package specifically designed as the federal foreclosure program.
3. The Mayor continues to oppose use of the Rainy Day ('unallocated') fund, as a means "to safeguard our bond rating." The Council is also concerned with the bond rating; however, in the midst of economic crisis, saving for future bond rates at the expense of unemployment, foreclosure, homelessness and a general depression economy is irresponsible since the "Rainy Day" is upon the City. Continuing to borrow and build is detrimental to the City's economic health.
4. According to the Board of Education there needs to be contingency accounts of over 3 millions dollars. The Council intended to avoid layoffs of teachers, guidance counselors, and custodians while providing decent music and arts and special education programming. It is the job of the Board of Education job to provide our children with the best balanced education using resources available. It is the job of the City and higher government to fairly finance it, readjusting if needed.
5. Finally, in our recent budget process, the Public, City Council, and unions are not receiving timely information needed for good decisions and negotiations, such as the quarterly and monthly reports already required by Charter. Resolutions to get true information, control expenses through hiring freeze, and other means to watch the budget are ignored as "advisory."

Overall, these behaviors – especially withholding information from the Public and Council - border on criminal. They are bad management, incompetent, and divide our City. These habits add to the current situation of tax increases, cuts in services and business, and layoffs of front-line workers. This budget and other actions of the Mayor and his Chief of Staff are unacceptable and harmful to the City. We must have an open democratic process now and into the future. Therefore this current budget cannot be accepted.